United Nations A/71/PV.79

General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-first session

79th plenary meeting
Thursday, 27 April 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 19 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

Draft resolutions (A/71/L.61/Rev.1, A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Few attributes of human performance have as much impact on our lives and our world as creativity. Outstanding achievement in the arts and science is held to depend on creativity. Creativity has been linked to the development of new social institutions and the leadership of extant institutions. Moreover, creativity has been shown to play a role in entrepreneurial activities and long-term economic growth. The study of creativity is an applied science. The most widely accepted definition of creativity — the production of novel ideas that are made useful — underscores the applied nature of the creative act.

The field of creativity has intrigued many authors and researchers for many decades and even centuries, going back to William Duff in 1767. He was primarily interested in establishing the cognitive traits that explained variance in people's accomplishments. Duff postulated three aspects: imagination, judgment and taste. Notably, he emphasized imagination as making the most important contribution to genius. Recent research has explored the role of creative expression in problem-solving and innovation and has focused on the development of methodologies aimed at deliberately nurturing creative thinking and mirroring the creative process in ways that allow individuals and groups to explicitly call on and employ their creative faculties.

Developed and developing countries around the world are recognizing the utility in such research findings and are embracing the idea that our creative capital is our most valuable asset today. We also agree that it is an asset that should be deployed in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is befitting, therefore, that, thus far, more than 80 States Members of the United Nations have joined today in calling for 21 April to be designated World Creativity and Innovation Day. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks all Member States that have sponsored and/or participated constructively in the consultations leading up to the introduction of draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1, entitled "World Creativity and Innovation Day", and those that may yet sponsor from the floor today.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolutions A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada): I thank the Ambassador of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for his leadership on the submission of draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1. I also pay tribute to Mr. You Dong Peng, Vice-Minister

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of the State Forestry Administration of China, and thank him for his leadership and for being here today.

In our capacity as Chair of the Bureau of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and as a country where forests assume a critical role in the economic, social and cultural fabric of the nation, Canada is proud to present for adoption to the General Assembly the first UNFF strategic plan for forests. The strategic plans represents a major milestone as it will launch a new business model for the Forum that mandates it to support the global goals on forests of the forest instrument and enhances the contribution of forests to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 15 is particularly important for forests. We believe that the adoption of the strategic plan by the General Assembly would send a strong and positive signal about the powerful role that forests can and must play in our collective future. Forests are essential to poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation, food security, sustainable economic opportunity and so much more.

In conclusion, let me sincerely thank all delegations that participated in the negotiation process leading to this ambitious outcome. I also encourage us all to take advantage of the opportunity of the upcoming sessions of the UNFF to present sensible solutions and engage with all relevant stakeholders to catalyse forest action. The future of our forests and of our planet depend on the work we accomplish.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/71/L.61/Rev.1, A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64.

We turn first to draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1, entitled "World Creativity and Innovation Day".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/71/L.61/Rev.1: Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Estonia, Ghana, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, the Niger, the Philippines, Poland, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 71/284).

The Acting President: We turn next to A/71/L.63, entitled "United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/71/L.63 was adopted (resolution 71/285).

The Acting President: We turn next to A/71/L.64, entitled "United Nations forest instrument". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/71/L.64 was adopted (resolution 71/286).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. You Dong Peng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): It is an honour and pleasure to attend this important meeting of the General Assembly today to witness the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, a new political commitment of the international community on sustainable forest development. On behalf of the State Forestry Administration of China, I would like to extend warm congratulations on the adoption of the historic resolution 71/285 and our appreciation to the United Nations Forum on Forest secretariat and related parties for theircontributionfruitful work in the run-up to this meeting.

Forests have ecological, economic, social and many other functions. As Chinese President Xi Jinping has said:

> "The forest is the main body of the terrestrial ecosystem and the largest means of subsistence on which a country or a nation can rely. It is the foundation of survival for humankind and is closely linked with the preservation of life, freshwater, homeland security, species security and climate security."

The international community has reached broad consensus on forests, but there are still multiple challenges to global forest governance that severely limit sustainable forest development. The strategic plan is a new milestone on forests, unrivalled since the adoption of the first non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests (resolution 62/98). It will provide a new and historic opportunities for global sustainable forest management. I believe that through the joint efforts of all Member States, forests will make greater contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to sustainable forest management, sees forests as major assets in building up ecosystems, incorporates conservation into the overall process of national development planning and promotes a series of innovative concepts of sustainable development, such as the concepts that ecosystem improvement means progress in civilization; that pellucid water and lush mountains are as valuable as gold and silver; that an improved ecosystem is basic human welfare; and that mountains, water, forests, farm lands and lakes should be managed in an integrated manner.

Those concepts are deeply embedded in the heart of the Chinese people and are being put into practice. The Chinese Government's recognition of the roles and functions of forests has reached unprecedented levels and is highly consistent with the strategic plan. Over the past decades, the Chinese Government has been firmly promoting national greening, sustainable forest management and the security of forest ecosystems, and has made outstanding achievements in forestation.

First, China's forest cover has increased from 13.92 per cent in 1992 to the current 21.66 per cent, and our forests reserves per unit area have continued to grow. Secondly, the protected area managed by the forestry sector accounts for 13 per cent of China's total land area, protecting 90 per cent of terrestrial ecosystem types. The trend of land desertification has been partially contained. Thirdly, the gross output value of the forest industry has grown by 4.75 times to nearly $1 trillion during the past decade. Fourthly, the collective forest tenure reform and the reform of State-owned forest regions and State-owned forest farms has enabled more than 400 million farmers to directly benefit from sustainable forest management. Tens of millions of job opportunities have been created, which effectively alleviates poverty and promotes economic, social and ecological development in a balanced way.

The United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 shoulders important historic responsibilities and has a significant mission in promoting sustainable forest development. I would like to take this opportunity to make three recommendations.

First, the global forest financing mechanism should be further strengthened to provide new and additional financial resources for Member States, especially developing countries, to implement the strategic plan. Secondly, countries should announce at their earliest convenience voluntary national contributions in consideration of their specific national setting and forest conditions, and take concrete actions to achieve the global forest goals. Thirdly, coordination among forest-related United Nations bodies, conventions and other international organizations should be strengthened in order to build synergies.

Finally, the Chinese Government will unswervingly implement the strategic plan and announce China's voluntary national contribution targets in due course. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely invite all parties to attend the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be hosted in China in September, and join hands toward the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Singer (United States of America): When the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 was adopted at the most recent special session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and in the Economic and Social Council last week, the United States made a statement clarifying its position on certain elements contained in the plan. We would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm those clarifications.

First, we understand that the actions contemplated under this plan are voluntary and do not purport to alter or affect rights or obligations under international law.

Regarding global forest goal 2.2, the United States supports efforts to improve the ability of small-scale enterprises to finance their businesses and sell their products. However, we must stress that the World Trade Organization (WTO) is the appropriate forum

for the negotiation of trade issues. The strategic plan does not represent an agreement on such issues, nor does it represent a commitment to provide new market access for goods or services. The strategic plan does not interpret or alter any WTO agreement or decision, including the agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property.

Regarding all references to the transfer of technology, the United States disassociates itself from such language, notably in paragraphs 15 and 58 (b).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations A/71/PV.80

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Thursday, 4 May 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/71/764/Add.6 and A/71/764/Add.7)

The Acting President: I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/71/764/Add.6 and Add.7, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/71/764/Add.5, the Sudan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have made the payments necessary to reduce their arrears below the amounts specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in documents A/71/764/Add.6 and Add. 7?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Members will recall that at, its 65th plenary meeting, on 19 December 2016, the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 106. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution before it today, it will be necessary to reopen the Assembly's consideration of that item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 106?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2016, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 106 to the Third Committee. In order to enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider agenda item 106 directly in plenary meeting and to proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 106 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Draft resolution (A/71/L.65)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.65, entitled "Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.65?

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The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 71/287).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position following the adoption of the resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Grant (Canada): I have the honour to deliver this joint explanation of position on behalf of Australia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and my own country, Canada.

Let me begin by thanking the co-facilitators for their work in bringing resolution 71/287 forward. We appreciate their efforts.

Our delegations joined the consensus on this resolution in order to allow the substantive work on an important event to commence as soon as possible. However, we wish to express our disappointment with the substance of the resolution and the process leading to its adoption, in four areas in particular.

First, the text falls short of our expectations in that it does not reflect key developments that have taken place since the adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2010 — most prominently the 2030 Agenda, which references human trafficking and modern slavery in three of its 17 goals. In our view, that constitutes an important and carefully negotiated shift to a broader and more comprehensive approach than the one reflected in the Global Plan of Action. In not reflecting the fact that new challenges have emerged since the adoption of the Globan Plan of Action, it runs the risk of adopting and outdated approach instead of taking the opportunity to move a key aspect of the 2030 Agenda forward in its human rights, development and law enforcement dimensions. This concern was expressed clearly by our delegations in the negotiating process. We regret that the text does not reflect our suggestions. Our expectation is that the political declaration will remedy this deficiency, as discussed with the co-facilitators in our bilateral consultations.

Secondly, while we appreciate the efforts of the co-facilitators to deliver a consensus outcome, the text does not enable the engagement of the full range of stakeholders working on trafficking at national and international levels. We recognize the importance of national human rights institutions being invited to engage in the preparatory one-day meeting. It is regrettable, however, that they will not be able to participate in the high-level meeting itself in an independent capacity. As our delegations noted throughout the negotiations, the participation of national human rights institutions in any other form, including on Government delegations, can compromise their purpose and objectives and might also mean that many are not invited to participate at all. As recognized by a growing number of United Nations bodies and processes, including recent modalities discussions, national human rights institutions have significant contributions to make to our deliberations at the United Nations. We will certainly be looking to ensure that this is recognized in our substantive discussions on this issue moving forward.

Thirdly, we also regret that the resolution does not invite special procedures mandate-holders to attend the high-level meeting, other than the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons. This is in direct contradiction to the Global Plan of Action, in which we supported the role and mandates of a range of special mandate-holders. It also contradicts the shift, as expressed in the 2030 Agenda, to a broader and more comprehensive approach to combat trafficking in persons and modern slavery.

Finally, we would like to underline that any outcome must complement what was agreed upon in the Global Plan of Action, in order to assist us in achieving our common goal to combat and eradicate trafficking in persons and modern slavery. This document should also reflect the important developments that have taken place since the adoption of the Global Plan of Action, including by identifying gaps and areas where greater or new focus may be required to implement the different elements of the Global Plan of Action.

Mr. Inguanez (Malta): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 member States.

The European Union would like to thank the co-facilitators for all their work on resolution 71/287. We participated in the three rounds of informal negotiations and we recognize the difficulty of reaching consensus. We also thank all delegations for their constructive engagement on the text.

However, we regret that several proposals, which are important to the European Union and which we believe would have strengthened key elements of the resolution, were not accepted during the negotiations. Given the crucial contribution of civil society to the fight against trafficking, we would have preferred

a more inclusive and transparent approach to civil society participation.

While we appreciate the inclusion of national human rights institutions in the resolution adopted, it would have been preferable to invite such bodies to participate in the high-level meeting independently of their respective national delegations, not least because of the importance of safeguarding their autonomous status.

Furthermore, while we welcome the inclusion of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in the opening plenary meeting, we believe that all United Nations special procedures mandate-holders and treaty bodies working on trafficking and related issues should have been invited to participate in the high-level meeting.

In the light of the important developments over the years since the adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, we believe it would have been appropriate for one of the panels to focus on emerging issues in the field of trafficking.

Once again, we would like to express our appreciation to the co-facilitators. We look forward to constructive and transparent negotiations towards agreement on the political declaration. The European Union is strongly committed to the fight against trafficking in persons. We look forward to the high-level meeting as an opportunity to discuss this important issue in the United Nations and further enhance our joint efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Catherine Boura of Greece and Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani of Qatar, co-facilitators of the informal consultations, who demonstrated great ability and patience in their conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on resolution 71/287. I also thank members for their valuable contributions to reaching agreement on the resolution.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 106.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations A/71/PV.81

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

81st plenary meeting
Thursday, 11 May 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Bande (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/71/589/Add.2)

The Acting President: In paragraph 3 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Olivier Myard of France as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for a term of office beginning on 11 May 2017 and ending on 31 December 2019.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Olivier Myard as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for a term of office beginning on 11 May 2017 and ending on 31 December 2019?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115.

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions (A/71/590/Add.2)

The Acting President: In paragraph 3 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Ms. Zhang Wei of China as a member of the Committee on Contributions, for a term of office beginning on 11 May 2017 and ending on 31 December 2017.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Ms. Zhang Wei as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 11 May 2017 and ending on 31 December 2017?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: I now invite the attention of the Assembly to the report of the Fifth Committee submitted under sub-item (d) of agenda item 115, entitled "Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission", as contained in document A/71/592/Add.1.

In order for the Assembly to consider the report of the Fifth Committee, it will be necessary to reopen

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the Assembly's consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 115.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 115 and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(d) Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission

Report of the Fifth Committee(A/71/592/Add.1)

The Acting President: In paragraph 3 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Vladimir Storozhev of the Russian Federation as a member of the International Civil Service Commission, for a term of office beginning on 11 May 2017 and ending on 31 December 2020.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Vladimir Storozhev as a member of the International Civil Service Commission, for a term of office beginning on 11 May 2017 and ending on 31 December 2020?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 115.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

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General Assembly

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Seventy-first session

82nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 24 May 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 125

Multilingualism

Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/757)

Draft resolution (A/71/L.68)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.68.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): It is not generally the custom for diplomats to ask one another awkward questions, but sometimes those questions linger even when they remain unspoken. Today I will therefore have to ask myself an awkward question.

Is this the time for the General Assembly to be discussing translation when dozens, hundreds, even thousands are still dying all over the world from war, hunger and disease? How appropriate is an agenda item on language and translation when the world is having very mixed success in its efforts to arrive at a sustainable global paradigm for security, equitable development and respect for human rights?

My answer is a short one. Yes, this is the time and it is appropriate. Why? The meaning and significance of draft resolution A/71/L.68, submitted to the Assembly today, is broader and deeper than a mere demonstration of respect for a well-known profession closely linked to diplomacy and international affairs. The draft resolution's foundation and timeliness are reflected in the symbolism of its subject and its importance to the work of the United Nations.

First, the draft resolution is not about institutions or entities. It is above all about people. It is about those unseen and still unsung heroes who labour on the linguistic front lines in the battle for transparency in communication, common sense and mutual understanding. Unfortunately, in our work this critically important focus on individual human beings frequently gives way to the temptation to limit ourselves to an institutional analysis of the issues we have to deal with.

Secondly, this is a draft resolution about the fragile, mysterious phenomenon that is the cornerstone of the national identities of every one of our United Nations and every one of our peoples and that helps us to understand who and what we are. It is about the insufficiently appreciated role of language in the life of human society.

Thirdly, like resolution 69/324, on multilingualism, it reflects our shared belief that each language is a synthesis of what is common and what is individual. It embodies the notion that the source of the strength of a united world lies in its diversity, and that to achieve unity we must work tirelessly to respect, preserve and maintain our world's cultural and linguistic diversity, which is a vital condition for strengthening the spirit of

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openness, fairness and dialogue in our intercourse with one another.

Fourthly, while the draft resolution is formally dedicated to representatives of the linguistic professions generally, in a sense it about all of us who gather here at the United Nations in the quest for a path to a safer, more sustainable and more just world. In its highest sense, translation is a craft and an art that helps to build bridges between civilizations, cultures and world views. In a world that has excelled at building walls and creating ever more new dividing lines, any wisdom or encouragement that teaches us how to do a better job of building bridges of friendship and understanding between us — spiritual as well as material bridges — can never be superfluous.

I am very grateful to the delegation of the friendly country of Azerbaijan for its invaluable support in realizing this initiative from the very beginning and to the sponsors and signatories of the draft resolution. It is not always easy to be among the first to support a new, unexplored topic, but it is always worthwhile. On behalf of the delegations that worked on the draft resolution, I am grateful to the leadership and our many colleagues in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, whose advice and support made today's event possible.

On behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, I bow down to the translators working in the quiet of their offices, far from this Hall, and the interpreters, sitting in their booths, now much more visible to the world, and all of the professional linguists who work to further the cause of peace, mutual understanding and development. I hope that the words spoken today in the General Assembly about professional translation and professional linguists will not be the last we hear on the subject. The delegation of Belarus believes that one topic particularly deserving of further discussion is that of legal protection for translators working in conflict zones and high-risk situations.

The draft resolution's most symbolic element is its declaration of 30 September as International Translation Day. So what if translators, professional and vocational, have been celebrating that day for the past 63 years? The fact that today the United Nations is putting its weight behind its words to dedicate the day is unquestionably a positive. It is never too late to do the right thing.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Spanish, comprised of more than 20 Spanish-speaking countries from three continents, including similar groups in Geneva and Vienna, and which Peru currently chairs. The main objective of the Group of Friends of Spanish is the promotion and use in the United Nations of Spanish as the world's second most widely spoken language and the second most searched, both online and in the Organization's social networks.

We should acknowledge the Spanish-speaking peoples' growing interest in the work of the United Nations, which is creating a challenge for the Organization in that it must adapt to longer and more sustained searches, interactions and requests by the Spanish-speaking public around the world. In that regard, the Group of Friends of Spanish supports and promotes multilingualism as a core value of the Organization in all its work and its presence around the world. We believe that multilingualism, as a cross-cutting mandate, helps us to hold a genuine multilateral dialogue, especially with other linguistic groups, based on respect for and the promotion of multiculturalism and international harmony.

In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's report on multilingualism (A/71/757), which details the various activities of the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management as the Coordinator for Multilingualism. The Group of Friends of Spanish supports the proposed terms of reference for the Coordinator for Multilingualism outlined in annex II of the report, which we hope will contribute to the coordinated, consistent and coherent implementation of multilingualism in all bodies and at all levels of the United Nations system. We appreciate the important work that has been done to date by the Coordinator for Multilingualism and urge the heads of departments and offices to support those efforts, in particular by appointing focal points for the network of coordination agents and better reflecting their multilingual requirements in their strategic plans. We also welcome the initiative to develop a standards framework for facilitating the implementation of mandates on multilingualism throughout the United Nations system, as well as the initiative establishing a multilingualism week.

The Group of Friends of Spanish has reviewed the Secretary-General's report with great interest and has some comments on section III, on integrating

multilingualism in the Secretariat. We would like to emphasize that the mechanisms for recruiting and managing human resources in most departments and offices function essentially in two languages, English and French. For example, we would like the Office of Human Resources Management to also develop an information brochure on Inspira in Spanish. On the other hand, in addition to generating documentation in the six official languages, it is also important that existing documentation be updated regularly. To cite one example, the Procurement Manual is available only in three official languages and is updated only in English.

We welcome the launch of the UN iLibrary platform, currently available in English, French and Japanese, and we hope that versions in the other four official languages will be made available during this year.

We would also like to reiterate our request to the Department of Public Information with regard to press releases. We consider it essential that the Department be able to provide timely, accurate and exhaustive information on all public intergovernmental meetings in the six official languages.

We welcome the development of the website dedicated to language careers to ensure the hiring and training of language staff. In the same vein, we consider it essential to strengthen and expand the call for the annual Saint Jerome Translation Contest. The Group stresses the importance of having a professional body of translators, interpreters and revisers. We are confident that the Secretariat will continue to strive to select the best professionals and to guarantee the conditions allowing for the highest quality interpretation and translation through processes that conform to the highest international standards.

The Group of Friends of Spanish recognizes the important work being carried out by translators, interpreters and other language professionals in promoting multilingualism. In that regard, we welcome the imminent adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.68, entitled "The role of professional translation in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding and development", which is scheduled for this morning.

While reiterating our full commitment to multilingualism and the activities of the Secretariat in that regard, the Group of Friends of Spanish is always at the Assembly's disposal.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/71/L.68, entitled, "The role of professional translation in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding and development".

I would like to inform the Assembly that at this stage the draft resolution has been closed for sponsorship via e-sponsorship.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Pollard (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/71/L.68, in addition to the delegations listed in that document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/71/L.68: Argentina, Bahrain, the Central African Republic, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Namibia, Nicaragua, Peru, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.68?

Draft resolution A/71/L.68 was adopted (resolution 71/288).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the interpreters for their professional work.

Agenda item 126 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

Draft resolution (A/71/L.69)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Madagascar to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.69.

Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the States and the Governments members of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), I have the honour, under sub-item

(j) of item 126 of the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.69, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie".

Two years after the adoption of the previous resolution bearing the same title, in April 2014 (resolution 69/270), the challenges facing our ever-changing world have continued to multiply and diversify. Those challenges affect many areas, including international peace and security, development, human rights, the fight against terrorism, and global warming, which leads to mass forced displacements of millions of persons and exacerbates the existing situations of vulnerability in several regions of the world.

Promoting peace and fighting poverty in all its forms and dimensions have therefore become a Promethean and, in some cases, a Sisyphian mission. It is no longer plausible or possible to deny that. Instead of constantly quibbling about this, we should eliminate this immediately. That must be translated into political terms, and the actions and measures of the international community must be strengthened in order to eliminate the devastating effects.

Those challenges are crucial and our responses must be in line with our ambitions, especially fiven the growing needs of our populations. La Francophonie and its 78 States members strive to implement and reinforce the commitments made and to increase our actions alongside the United Nations. The States members and the Governments members of La Francophonie are putting their awareness into play and, through this draft resolution, we are joining the United Nations efforts to work together in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, environmental, energy, cultural and linguistic domains, as well as in the field of human rights. In doing so, we will be able to respond appropriately to these global challenges.

This draft resolution comes at a crucial moment in the history of the United Nations. Indeed, it is taking place almost two years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action on Financing for Development, and more than a year after the Paris Agreement. In its preambular part, the draft resolution reaffirms the political will of the international community, including States and Governments members of the OIF, to achieve, through the realization of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets, sustainable development in all its three components, namely, economic, social and environmental.

As in the declaration and the resolutions adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the countries sharing French in Antananarivo on 26 and 27 November 2016 — the basic documents of our negotiations — several paragraphs recall the strong determination of the OIF member States and Governments to pursue and strengthen cooperation with the United Nations in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. That cooperation must be close, strong and multifaceted if we hope for a better world.

The draft resolution also recalls the determination and efforts of La Francophonie in the areas of human rights and gender equality, as reflected in the decision of the Francophonie Summit held in Antananarivo, to create within the organization a permanent entity responsible for promoting gender equality in the areas of the empowerment of women and girls, entrepreneurship, education and training, and youth development. Multilingualism plays an important role in that regard as a fundamental value of the United Nations, in particular in the area of peacekeeping, where linguistic diversity constitutes a prerequisite for the effectiveness of field missions.

The draft resolution underlines the efforts of La Francophonie to promote water as an instrument of cooperation, clean and sustainable energy for all, as well as in the fight against terrorism and in the maintenance of peace.

In that context, it highlights the establishment, in October 2016, of the Boutros-Ghali Peacekeeping Observatory, which will in particular serve as a framework for exchanges between experts and francophone eminent persons from personnel-contributing countries. The Observatory will undoubtedly serve as a forum for the exchange and development of best practices and training tools for personnel to be deployed in French-speaking areas, in line with the performance objective of peacekeeping operations.

The draft resolution also encourages the strengthening of exchange and interaction between the United Nations and OIF, notably through the group of French-speaking Ambassadors in New York, over which I have the honour I presiding.

Finally, the draft resolution underlines the ongoing commitment of francophone countries to supporting major intergovernmental processes, including discussions and discussions on the future global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the preparations for the next oceans conference.

On behalf of the Malagasy Government and the States and Governments members of the OIF, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all the delegations and States Members of the United Nations that actively participated in the drafting of this resolution and whose spirit of solidarity and will, I hope, allow the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.69, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie".

I would like to inform the Assembly that at this stage the draft resolution has been closed for sponsorship via e-sponsorship.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/71/L.69, in addition to the delegations listed in that document, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Czech Republic, Finland, Haiti, Latvia, Lebanon, the Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine and Viet Nam.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.69?

Draft resolution A/71/L.69 was adopted (resolution 71/289).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of Madagascar for skillfully leading the negotiations on the resolution just adopted (resolution 71/289), entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie". Having actively participated in the negotiations and having joined the consensus on the resolution, my delegation would like share the following brief observations.

Azerbaijan is not a member of the International Organization of la Francophonie. However, my country enjoys partnership relations with almost all of its member States. We successfully cooperate with some of those member States in the framework of regional organizations. We pay special attention to making available more opportunities for learning the French language in Azerbaijan, including by developing existing educational infrastructure, along with creating new educational facilities. Therefore, in line with the initiative put forth by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and France, a French lyceum and French-Azerbaijani university were opened in Baku in 2014 and 2016, respectively. In addition, Azerbaijan holds an annual day of recognition for the French language and French culture. In April, we hosted a series of cultural events dedicated to the month of La Francophonie, and the Azerbaijani University of Languages was admitted to membership in the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, which is a global network of over 850 universities in more than 100 countries. Moreover, a Francophonie centre was established in that same university.

The increasing role of organizations established on the basis of shared cultural and linguistic values of their member States, such as the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, gives rise to the need for enhancing their cooperation with the United Nations across a broad agenda of mutual interests and concerns.

With regard to the resolution just adopted, we note the firm commitment of the States members of the International Organization of the Francophonie to international peace and security, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, linguistic and cultural diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. In that context, strict compliance with the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, particularly those relating to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, acquire significant

importance. Therefore, it is critical that regional forums not be misused for the political advantage of those who persistently violate international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, advocate a culture of impunity and try to impose a distorted perception of a rules-based order. We believe that the continued engagement of the United Nations and regional organizations, including the International Organization of la Francophonie, together with strengthened cooperation between them, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and United Nations resolutions, will effectively contribute to peace, security and development in the respective regions and beyond.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

We will now hear statements following the adoption of resolution 71/289.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): I wish to extend my deep appreciation and gratitude to the delegation of Madagascar for having conducted the negotiations in a very effective and professional way. I also want to thank the membership of the United Nations for the consensual adoption of the very important resolution 71/289, on relations between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), of which Armenia is a member. Armenia looks forward to working together with its OIF partners, both within the United Nations and in other settings.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/18, of 10 November 1978, and decision 53/453, of 18 December 1998, I now call on the observer for the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Ms. Herdt (International Organization of la Francophonie) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), I would like to thank the members of the General Assembly for their consensus adoption of resolution 71/289, on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie. I express that gratitude on behalf of Her Excellency Ms. Michaëlle Jean, Secretary-General of la Francophonie, and of the organization as a whole, which includes 84 member States and Governments spread across five continents, 79 of which are Members of the United Nations.

We welcome the particularly fruitful collaboration between our two Organizations and the joint actions that are carried out on a daily basis in the field. The resolution that has just been adopted reflects the values we share, our shared understanding that we face major challenges to overcome and the unfailing willingness of the OIF to address all major international issues. Faced with these high stakes and urgent matters, La Francophonie is positioning itself as a powerful source of proposals and for taking action. It contributes fully to fostering the vitality and diversity of multilateral organizations, to sustainable development, to international peace and security, to capacity-building and to the employability of young people.

I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, and to Secretary-General António Guterres for the importance they attach to cooperation between our two institutions.

We heartily thank the delegation of Madagascar, which served as facilitator for this resolution, for its ongoing readiness and outstanding commitment to welcoming the recent and numerous developments in cooperation between the United Nations and the OIF. These developments have been fuelled by the inroads made at the lates Summit of Heads of State and Government of La Francophonie, which was held in Antananarivo on 26 and 27 November 2016, which, in addition to the political endeavours of La Francophonie, underscored the strength of its cultural and economic diplomacy.

Finally, I would like to commend the work and solidarity of the group of French-speaking Ambassadors, which has contributed significantly to the promotion of the values and ideals of La Francophonie within the United Nations, as well as to the achievement of our common objectives.

Today's resolution is a reflection of the efforts made by the OIF and the United Nations for better coordinated actions that will lead to ever more concrete solutions and results for people. I therefore confirm that the International Organization of la Francophonie is fully ready to continue its efforts aimed at strengthening this cooperation.

The Acing President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker on this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (j) agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 19 and 73 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft decision (A/71/L.62)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/71/L.62, entitled "Accreditation and participation of intergovernmental organizations in the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/71/L.62?

Draft decision A/71/L.62 was adopted (decision 71/552 B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19 and sub-item (a) of agenda item 73.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations A/71/PV.83

General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

83rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 31 May 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Terrorist attacks worldwide

The President: Before moving to the first item on our agenda today, on behalf of the General Assembly I would like to express sincere condolences to the families and compatriots of all those who lost their lives in terrorist attacks over recent days. This morning's attack in Kabul and yesterday's attack in Baghdad come on the heels of the attack in Manchester just last week. Those attacks are a sharp reminder to us all of the need for the international community to do all in its power to prevent violent extremism and combat terrorism.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-second session

The President: I now invite members, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-second session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session should be elected from among the Eastern European States.

In this connection, I have been advised that the Chair of the Eastern European States Group for the month of November 2016 has informed the Secretariat that the Group has endorsed His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, for the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, I therefore declare His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák of Slovakia elected by acclamation as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

On behalf of the Assembly, I wholeheartedly congratulate His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

I would like to say a few words of congratulations. As a three-term Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, having served the United Nations and the European Union in a number of senior conflict prevention, resolution and mediation roles, and having worked previously as a career diplomat, Minister Lajčák brings a dedicated work ethic and an unwavering commitment to multilateralism and a wealth of experience to the role. Without a doubt, those skills will serve him and the United Nations well over the coming session.

Minister Lajčák will assume the presidency of the General Assembly on 12 September, at a critical time for the United Nations and the international community. With the world facing global challenges on a massive scale, including cycles of conflict and relapse, the largest refugee and humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, the spread of terrorism and the destructive

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impacts of climate change, the General Assembly has a critical role to play in setting the stage for sustaining peace and achieving sustainable development.

In recent times, I have had the honour of meeting Minister Lajčák on several occasions, and I have been struck by his commitment to forging a United Nations fit for the twenty-first century. The United Nations is an organization that serves the people, is based on ethics and transparency and promotes human rights and the rule of law. I am confident that during the seventy-second session, under Minister Lajčák's leadership, the United Nations will stay the course on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the months ahead, I will continue the close collaboration already begun with Minister Lajčák and his team to ensure continuity in the work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary committees. I am confident we will achieve a smooth transition between our presidencies and that his team will hit the ground running in September.

The General Assembly has today elected a dedicated and able President for its seventy-second session. I congratulate Minister Lajčák on his election and wish him the very best for the session ahead. I now invite him to take the floor.

Mr. Lajčák (Slovakia): Before I begin, I would like to join and support the statement of President Thomson, in condemning — in the strongest terms — the horrible attack in Kabul. There is no justification for such horrific violence.

First of all, I would like to thank the General Assembly. I am truly delighted to be elected as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. It is my greatest honour to have earned the support of the Assembly, and I feel truly privileged to have the opportunity to serve it throughout the upcoming session.

I have been a professional diplomat all my life, serving both Slovakia and the international community with passion and commitment. I have always believed in respect, honesty and dignity, rules, dialogue and the search for compromise. Over the course of my career, I have been fortunate to meet many of the representatives gathered here. Thus, earning the Assembly's trust today means that I am taking on not only a professional, but also a personal responsibility.

It is the first time that Slovakia has been entrusted with this role. I am very grateful for the support at home from the President, the Government and the people. My country has always been firmly committed to multilateralism, with the United Nations at the centre. And over the years, we have contributed to a wide range of United Nations activities through work in the main United Nations organs, participation in peacekeeping operations or delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.

During my tenure, I want to pay due attention to all three United Nations pillars, and I intend to work on the following six priorities.

First of all, I ask that Member States focus on people in striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet. I believe we can do more to bring the United Nations closer to the world's citizens. Nations around the globe continue to have high hopes for the United Nations. It is a key task for the General Assembly, as the most representative organ, to step up its efforts. It should make a real difference in the lives of ordinary people.

Secondly, I wish to highlight the importance of prevention and mediation in sustaining peace. I share that priority with Secretary-General Guterres, as I have always been a strong proponent of preventive diplomacy. Past efforts and existing United Nations opportunities on sustaining peace will be addressed at the already mandated high-level meeting in April 2018.

Thirdly, I want to focus on migration. The consultative process for the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration will shift into intergovernmental negotiations. Migration is not a short-term seasonal or regional problem. It is a very complex global and generational issue that demands worldwide attention.

Fourthly, I will also take a closer look at the Sustainable Development Goals and climate. We need to maintain the political momentum. I will follow up on the work of President Thomson and support Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed in their efforts. More should be done to address inequalities and explore ways to help least developed countries and small island developing States. I feel encouraged by the commitments of Member States and the current leadership of this organ in that regard. Activities such as next week's conference on oceans are steps in the right direction, in terms of both substance and timing.

Fifthly, the overarching principle of the respect for human rights will guide my work. There can be no peace and development without respect for dignity and fundamental rights. Thus, I will continue to promote equality, including equal opportunities for men and women, as a top priority. The principle of equal representation will also be reflected in the composition of my team. In that regard, I will be actively participating in that dialogue. I strongly wish to achieve both gender and geographical balance in the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

The sixth priority is quality, especially in terms of mandated events. I will not bring any new initiatives that may put an additional burden mainly on smaller States. I would, rather, like to see the agenda in clusters and streamlined with concrete results.

The presidency of the General Assembly is an increasingly demanding position. In preparing for my post, I consulted broadly with Member States and other stakeholders. It is our common goal to create a stronger United Nations that is able to better meet all the expectations. I will facilitate a constructive, informed and open interaction among Member States and with the Secretary-General. I stand ready to consult his reform initiatives in the area of peace and security, development and management.

In search of a deeper change for our Organization, we must strengthen the trust between the United Nations and the membership, as well as the major groups. Many Member States feel that we need tangible progress on the United Nations reform agenda and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. I will do all I can to support this effort.

It is vital to make further strides towards improving the efficiency and role of the General Assembly. I share the view that this is both a technical and a political issue. By far, the most widely mentioned United Nations reform topic is the reform of the Security Council. There is a high degree of accord that the time is ripe to transform the Security Council into a twenty-first century body. I intend to work closely and consult widely with Member States on how to push forward the agreement our leaders made at the 2005 World Summit.

Let me thank the Secretary-General for being here with us today. It is not an easy time to be heading the world's leading international Organization. His steadfast commitment in taking the United Nations mandate forward is very much appreciated and needed.

I wish to express my special gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your outstanding cooperation, advice and guidance. You are a committed leader in many areas, but especially on the promotion of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Your dedication to strengthening the continuity and the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly has been exceptional. You and everyone on your team have been so helpful in getting ready for my presidency. Without your generosity and goodwill the transition would be much more complicated. Until September, let me assure you, Sir, of my firm support to your ongoing efforts.

I wish to thank Member States once again for the opportunity to serve them. I will do my utmost to represent them to the best of my abilities. I look forward to collaborating closely with all of them, very much focusing on pragmatic and practical issues. I pledge to represent each country as an honest broker in a fair and open manner, and I want all Member States to have a sense of belonging and equal relevance.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President-elect of the General Assembly.

At this juncture, I would like to advise Member States that there will be an opportunity, following the adjournment of this meeting, for representatives to extend their congratulations to the President-elect in the Indonesian Lounge immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

It is now my honour to give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: I am honoured to be here for the election of the new President of the General Assembly, but let me first say what a privilege it is to work with you, Mr. President, dear Peter Thomson. I am deeply grateful for your leadership over the past year and am looking forward to continuing our partnership in the months to come. You still have a long way to go. You have guided the Assembly outstandingly well during the transition from one Secretary-General to the next, and you have fully supported my efforts to sharpen our focus on prevention, achieve reform and better serve the peoples of the world. Your very strong commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and your enthusiastic leadership in relation to the Ocean Conference represent a legacy that will never be forgotten in the United Nations. On top of all that,

you are creating a very solid friendship that I will also never forget.

I warmly congratulate Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I had the good fortune to get to know him as we each presented our vision for the United Nations to the Member States last year.

Foreign Minister Lajčák has always demonstrated an impressive command of all aspects of United Nations action and a strong commitment to the principles that govern our work. He has expressed his firm belief that strengthening the United Nations is the best investment to achieve the universal desire for peace, development, equality and justice in the world. I think that both of us saw high expectations and got a strong sense of how much Governments and peoples need the United Nations to respond to the cries of people around the world, who deserve lasting peace, justice, human rights and human dignity.

As we prepare for a busy and meaningful next session of the General Assembly, I look forward to collaborating with its new President in charting a course to a better future.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for those remarks, in particular the kind remarks he made towards me.

It is my privilege to give the floor first to the representative of Cameroon, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Mana (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Group of African States, I commend Secretary-General António Guterres and you, Mr. President, for the efforts undertaken during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. I would also like to extend our warmest congratulations to the President-elect of the seventy-second session, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák.

Africa welcomes the election of the President-elect because our continent is driven by the conviction that he will build upon our common initiatives in order to find solutions not only to the issues faced by the entire planet, but also to the specific challenges faced by Africa. Those challenges include development financing, promoting sustainable development, implementing the commitments agreed upon by the international community to combat the effects of climate change, addressing immigration and migr galvanizing support for African efforts to ensure p and stability on the continent and promoting refo the Organization, in particular reform of the Sec Council, in order to rectify the historic inju Africa faces.

We believe that the consensus on the Presi elect, his vast experience, as described by the Pres of the General Assembly and the Secretary-Ge and his readiness to serve at the various levels o Organization attest to his commitment and bode we a successful mandate. Africa counts on the Presi elect to ensure that the continent's priorities will be into consideration. Under his presidency, Africa h that its voice will be heard and increasingly heede

(*spoke in English*)

In my national capacity, allow me to assur President-elect that the delegation of Came will provide him with the necessary support fo action he takes, as Cameroon will be one of th Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its sev second session.

The President: I now give the floor to representative of the Marshall Islands, who will s on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Ms. Kabua (Marshall Islands): On behalf o Government, I offer sincere condolences to all affected by yesterday's tragic bombing in Kabul.

As Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group of State the month of May, I have the honour and priv to address the General Assembly today on beha the Group with words of gratitude for entrusting Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák with the hono being the President-elect of the General Assembly behalf of the Group, I extend my sincere congratula to His Excellency Mr. Lajčák on his election to s prominent post.

The stewardship of the President of the Ge Assembly is of crucial importance to addressing of the challenges facing the United Nations. W confident that, based on his professional qualities vast experience in the United Nations arena, inclu his service as Minister for Foreign Affairs and fo Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia, the Presi elect will make significant contributions to the su of the upcoming session of the General Assembl particular, his early engagement of regional grou

the United Nations already demonstrates the importance of inclusive participation.

Let me also express my sincere gratitude to President Thomson for the excellent work and leadership he has provided so far and wish him well in the next few months of his continuing presidency of the seventy-first session. I would like to commend the initiatives taken so far by President Thomson, including outcomes on peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and governance of the United Nations. It should also be noted that President Thomson has played an invaluable role in multiple action events regarding implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including building sustainable peace for all, climate change, financing, innovation and the upcoming high-level Sustainable Development Goal events on oceans and education.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, I would like to pledge our full support to the President-elect and wish him every success in carrying out his duties during the seventy-second session. Many challenges undoubtedly lie ahead. But together, with the cooperation of all States Members of the United Nations and the leadership of Mr. Lajčák and Secretary-General Guterres, we can continue working to ensure a more effective and efficient United Nations that is fit for purpose and that will make the world a safer, just and more prosperous place for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Winid (Poland): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, it is my honour and pleasure to extend our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Minister Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

Minister Lajčák brings to that position a wealth of experience gained during his distinguished career in the diplomatic service, both of his own country and in international institutions. Since 2012, he has been successfully serving as the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. We are confident that Minister Lajčák will utilize his many years of practical experience, coupled with extensive managerial skills, when he takes up the new challenge of leading the General Assembly during its seventy-second session.

At the next session, we will have to meet ambitious goals. A number of intergovernmental multi-stakeholder and reform processes will continue and will require the leadership of the President of the General Assembly and constructive political dialogue among Member States. We strongly believe that Minister Lajčák will significantly contribute to the successful outcome of the upcoming General Assembly session. We have great expectations for progress to be made in many areas and welcome Minister Lajčák's set of clearly outlined priorities that will help us in conducting our work.

On behalf of the Eastern European Group, I would also like to express our gratitude to President Peter Thomson of Fiji for his remarkable efforts during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. Over the past few months, you, Sir, have led the complex work of this body in an excellent manner, focusing first of all on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, we commend your commitment to facilitating a smooth transition and a strong start for the new Secretary-General. We also appreciate your active engagement in United Nations reform, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and Security Council reform. We also take this opportunity to declare our strong commitment to the success of the upcoming Ocean Conference and highly commend your leadership in the preparation process.

Sir, you can count on the support of the Eastern European Group until the end of your tenure as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. We hope that your highly beneficial engagement with the United Nations will continue in future, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Let me conclude by reaffirming the full support of the States members of the Eastern European Group for the newly elected President of the General Assembly, Minister Miroslav Lajčák, during his upcoming tenure. We wish him success in fulfilling his demanding mandate.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), over which the Republic of Haiti has the honour to preside, let me say that I am particularly pleased to extend my warmest welcome to the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, as he readies himself to assume the high office with whose functions the peoples of the United Nations have just entrusted him.

GRULAC welcomes his election to the presidency of the General Assembly with joy and enthusiasm.

More than just a simple matter of protocol, his presence here today is clear testimony of the importance attached to all regional groups that make up our Assembly. It is also a recognition of their well-known contribution to the work of the General Assembly. The President-elect may be assured of the full support of GRULAC in the coming year.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to you, Ambassador Peter Thomson. As Mr. Miroslav Lajčák's predecessor, during your term of office you have worked with conviction and unanimously recognized determination to advance the cause of peace, human rights and sustainable development. I extend to you GRULAC's gratitude for the fact that you always take the high road, your welcome initiatives and your remarkable contributions to the work of the Assembly.

The President-elect will be taking up his post at a particularly difficult time at which we are seeing an increase in international tensions and the proliferation of ever more complex and diffuse threats. We are also seeing problems of a transborder nature, be it the tragedy facing migrants and refugees, the degradation of our environment or the North-South divide, which has left a significant swathe of our humankind languishing in poverty.

Everyone agrees that there is a need for a new impetus and fresh momentum in international action so as to ensure strong and effective responses that are commensurate with the challenges and expectations of the community of nations. In this aspiration for revitalization, the General Assembly no doubt has a major role to play, along with the other principal organs of the United Nations, to make the Organization the crucible of a new international order, in a stronger spirit of solidarity, that is more just and is based on the rule of law, dialogue and collective responsibility.

We are aware of the President-elect's commitment to these values and ideals. He is a diplomat, an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Special Representative and lead negotiator of the European Union on various issues of major importance. As Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, throughout his brilliant career he has been a key player in many struggles to bring about international peace and security and ensure respect for human rights.

He is therefore particularly well prepared to take up the functions of President of the General Assembly. He brings to this position a vast experience of the world and the corridors of international diplomacy, as well as first-hand knowledge of issues concerning assistance to countries emerging from conflict and of the processes of reconciliation, national reconstruction and peacebuilding. These are all precious assets that he will bring to his term of office.

We are certain that in this position of heavy responsibility, he will continue to display his outstanding qualities, his energy and his well-known talent to inspire and promote the agenda of the General Assembly, so that the United Nations as a whole can more effectively meet the challenges of stability, peace, security, growth and economic development at the regional and global levels.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are facing challenges and problems whose character and scope are all too familiar to us: migration, organized crime, global warming, debt unsustainability and, more importantly, our fight against poverty. We are aware of the importance that he attaches to these issues: to support for political processes and post-conflict reconstruction, to the strengthening of the nexus between security and development, to eliminating poverty and to the need to tackle the root causes of crises, not only their symptoms.

The President-elect has said that the United Nations must remain not only the main forum for discussing new global threats and challenges as well as defining lines of action, but also an important partner for countries in the areas of development, peace, security and human rights. That is what he said during an interview with *Time* magazine. I assure the President-elect that these remarks will be strongly echoed by GRULAC.

We share his faith in multilateralism, his vision of a world governed by international law and his ambition to see the General Assembly fully assume its role in achieving an order of greater peace and solidarity. In particular, we hope that under the presidency of Mr. Lajčák, the General Assembly will breathe new life into its work, which is so necessary for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The President-elect can count on the support of GRULAC, which will always stand with him in his efforts to ensure that the General Assembly has a higher profile and fulfils its agenda. It is in this spirit that I am pleased to convey to him, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, our heartfelt wishes for a successful term of office and for every success in carrying out the work of the General Assembly under his presidency.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák upon his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

As the current Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, he brings to the office and impressive and distinguished career in Government and diplomacy. His extensive experience working for his country's diplomatic service, helping to establish the European External Action Service, mediating the post-conflict crisis in the Western Balkans and assisting in the transformation of his country provide him with deep insight into conflict resolution and conflict prevention, which is required today more than ever.

We welcome his commitment to continuing the reform of the United Nations, as well as his focus on peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet, and look forward to his contributions in these areas. We know that he will guide the General Assembly wisely in its seventy-second session, where further progress on sustaining peace, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the reforms of the United Nations and the compact for refugees and migrants will be among the core subjects.

We wish the President-elect every success, and he can rely on the full support of the Western European and Other States Group. At the same time, we would also like to express to you, Mr. President, our deep appreciation for your excellent work throughout the current session of the General Assembly. Your commitment and leadership, in particular your emphasis on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, has helped to focus our joint efforts to ensure progress. We welcome your leadership in guiding the General Assembly as we address issues of climate change, including through international instruments and forthcoming conferences. Your tireless work to promote the 2030 Agenda within and outside the United Nations has contributed to building global momentum towards its implementation, and we look forward to working with you, Sir, during the remaining month of your term in office.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Today is a wonderful day. We have the chance to congratulate our new President-elect, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and we also have the opportunity to thank President Thomson for the great work he has done over the past year in bringing peace and security around the world.

The United States wants to be as engaged as possible in the United Nations, but we want to do it in a way that ensures that we are bringing efficiency, effectiveness and reliability to what the United Nations does. We feel that at this time there are a lot of challenges in the world, but also many opportunities.

If we band together, if we work together, we can rid the world of such terrible, cowardly acts as those committed in Kabul against our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. We can make sure that we deal with migration and refugees so that they can live with dignity. We can focus on human rights and making sure that we are treating all people as if they are God's children. We can also make sure that we are focused on how we are going to continue to transition as we go through these challenges into making them great opportunities. We can eliminate the sexual exploitation that we are seeing in peacekeeping missions. We can make those peacekeeping missions smarter instead of working harder. All of these things we know we can do, but we need to do them together.

We certainly look forward to President-elect Lajčák's leadership. I want him to know that the United States will stand with him as a partner to support him in every possible way we can. The seventy-second session of the General Assembly is going to be an important one. It is going to be one that has many actions, but we know that if we stand together, it is going to be a very successful one.

The President: At this juncture, I would like to remind members that, in accordance with resolution

70/305, of 13 September 2016, the President-elect of the General Assembly will take an oath of office at the moment of handing over the gavel in the final plenary meeting of the seventy-first session.

I would also like to repeat that there will be an opportunity for representatives to extend their congratulations to the President-elect in the Indonesian Lounge, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the seventy-second regular session

The President: As announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-second session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the States members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name has been drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, the Czech Republic was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the seventy-second session.

Agenda item 6

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the seventy-second session

The President: I should now like to consult members with a view to proceeding to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

> "The Vice-Presidents shall be elected after the election of the Chairmen of the six Main Committees referred to in rule 98, in such as way as to ensure the representative character of the General Committee".

It is my understanding that, since the elections of the Chairpersons of the Main Committees will conform with decision 68/505, of 1 October 2013, on the "Interim arrangement on the pattern for the rotation of the chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly", it will not have an impact on the geographical distribution of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the representative character of the General Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly therefore agrees to proceed to elect the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session shall be elected according to the following pattern: six representatives from African States, five representatives from Asia-Pacific States, three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States; two representatives from Western European and other States; and five representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council.

I would now like to make a personal note from the Chair. I note that of the 16 nominations submitted by the regional groups, only two are female. In the light of our ongoing discussions regarding gender parity at the senior levels of the United Nations, I find that regrettable. In addition, I note that none of the nominations for the Committee Chairs is female. I therefore use this occasion to encourage regional groups again to consider what steps they can take in making nominations in the future to advance gender equality at the United Nations.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read out the names on the slate of candidates:

African States:

Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Morocco and Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific States:

Afghanistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates and Vanuatu

Latin American and Caribbean States:

Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile and Guatemala

Western European and other States:

Finland and Israel

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the five representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have therefore been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly for the seventy-second session: Afghanistan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, China, Finland, France, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Liberia, Madagascar, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States that have just been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by strongly condemning the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester, Baghdad and Kabul. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Government and the people of those countries.

We have asked for the floor to place on the record our position on the election of the Israeli regime as Vice-President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We think that the Israeli regime in no way qualifies for that position. Allow me to briefly explain why.

For decades, the United Nations has time and again condemned Israel for its illegal occupation of the land of Palestine and other countries of the region and its flagrant violations of the norms of international law. For decades, Israel has insistently violated the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Numerous resolutions have been adopted in the General Assembly and other United Nations organs, deploring the criminal acts of Israel and demanding their immediate end. Israel's response to all of those legitimate demands has always been the same — denial and defiance. Israel has been deaf, but not mute. It has repeatedly attacked the United Nations and its Member States in a sinister way for their defence of the Palestinian people and for rightly criticizing the Israeli regime. Instead of changing course, Israel has repeatedly accused the United Nations and its organs, including the Assembly, of being anti-Semitic, biased and partial.

As such, bestowing a vice-presidency of the General Assembly on Israel will serve neither the principles of the United Nations Charter nor the work of the Assembly. Israel is no friend of the United Nations and therefore does not qualify for such a position in the most important organ of the United Nations, which it consistently slams. We therefore disassociate from the decision to elect Israel as Vice-President of the General Assembly.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Group of Arab States and in my capacity as its Chair for this month, we would like to express the Arab Group's reservation about Israel's candidature to serve as Vice-President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. That position requires respect for United Nations resolutions, whereas Israel violates those resolutions in an ongoing manner and views itself as being above United Nations resolutions. We believe that accepting Israel's participation in all international bodies, including the United Nations, requires respect for both the Charter of the United Nations, international law and legitimate international resolutions calling for an end to the occupation since 1967 of all Arab territories, on the basis of the Arab Initiative. Israel also needs to acknowledge the right of the Arab people, including the Palestinian people, to self-determination and respect their independence. The Palestinians suffer as a result of Israeli occupation, including of East Jerusalem.

Hence, the Arab Group would like to voice its reservations on Israel's candidature for that position.

Mr. Awad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to register our strong objection to Israel's candidature for the role of

Vice-President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

At the outset, I recall that the nomination of Israel to that post by the Group of Western European States was no accident but rather part of systematized policy to project Israel, the occupying Power, as a key player in the work of the United Nations, just as was done in recent years in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Committees, especially in the light of the short political memory of some Member States with respect to Israel.

All Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict refer to Israel as an occupying Power, and its candidature to any entity of the United Nations is in itself counter to international law and violates the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. How, then, can that not run true for this post?

The General Assembly is a global Parliament that enacts international resolutions. This organ seeks to attain the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. If Israel were to assume the position of Vice-President, that would be at odds with those goals and with resolution 273 (III) of 1949, which sets the terms for admitting Israel to membership in the United Nations, namely by complying with resolution 181 (II) of 1947, establishing the State of Palestine, as well as with resolution 194 (III) of 1948, calling for the return of Palestinian refugees.

Since Israel has implemented none of these and other resolutions of international legitimacy, and has refused to end its occupation of the occupied territories, it is not entitled to assume any position at the United Nations prior to having implemented the resolutions of international legitimacy and to putting an end to its occupation of Arab occupied lands, including the occupied Syrian Golan, that have endured occupation for over 50 years. Israel must end its violations of international law and principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I wish to inform members that, immediately after the adjournment of this meeting, consecutive meetings of the First Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth Committees will be held in the Hall to elect their respective Bureau members.

I wish to remind members that after the election of the Chairpersons of the six Main Committees, the General Committee of the General Assembly for the seventy-second session will then be fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.